

March 15, 2007

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL COMPENSATION
AND CHARTER STUDY COMMITTEE**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Council Compensation and Charter Study Committee convened in a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. on March 15, 2007, in the 3rd Floor Assembly Room.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Members Bailey, Busch, Fitch, Fox, Lee, Messerlian, Rische, Sargent, Shwarts, and Skoll

Absent: None

Also Present: Assistant to the City Manager Chaparyan
Assistant City Manager Giordano
Deputy City Attorney Strader

3. REPORT OF STAFF ON THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Assistant to the City Manager Chaparyan reported that the affidavit had been posted.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 1, 2007

Member Skoll pointed out a typographical error on Page 1; item 8 under Discussion Items should read "Text" not Test.

MOTION: Member Busch, seconded by Member Fox, moved for the approval of the March 1, 2007 Council Compensation and Charter Study Committee minutes as amended; hearing no objection, Chairperson Lee so ordered.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. City Council provisions for compensation;

Noting the information received from staff, Chairperson Lee asked that each Committee Member share their thoughts on a compensation adjustment.

Member Shwarts stated that in terms of salary and consideration of the additional compensation benefits, she is satisfied with the current \$100 amount.

Member Skoll shared that upon her review of the submitted comparison information; she believes adjustments should be made to increase the Mayor's salary to \$350 and City Council to \$150.

Member Sargent recommended an increase to \$200.

Member Bailey stated that he feels the current salary of \$100 is adequate.

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Member Rische noted her agreement with the current salary.

Member Messerlian commented that if the Committee is looking at compensation as an honorarium for service, \$100 is fine.

Member Busch recommended maintaining the current amount.

Sharing that she is of the understanding that an increase to salary cannot go above 50%~~5%~~, Member Fitch recommended \$150.

Member Fox stated that the salary should be at least \$200 with the understanding that City Council members do not have to accept the salary or benefits if they do not want to.

Chairperson Lee shared his thoughts on tying the salary into those of General Law cities by including some type of mechanism to adjust the salary accordingly. He believes it will be a saleable approach and eliminate the need to re address this issue in the future.

Member Busch noted that some of the benefits afforded to City Council are similar to those of full time employees.

Member Fitch inquired as to how many hours City Council members put in. Member Messerlian responded that when he was on Council he averaged between 20 to 30 hours per week.

Member Shwartz explained that her focus on determining salary is not based on hours, as she is looking at it as an honorarium for service. She shared her expectations on what a City Council member is required to do and the importance, she believes, in paying them the amount of compensation needed to perform their duties.

Member Messerlian questioned if consideration should be given to including an annual formula to adjust the salary accordingly. If a salary adjustment is recommended, he suggested an increase to meet the lowest comparable city which is Lawndale at \$350.

In regard to covering appropriate expenses, Chairperson Lee shared the he remembers attending the same events he did as a Council member before and after his term, and that Council members are considered guests at many events and are not charged. He stated that there can be another side to consider whereby a council member may be one who works for an hourly wage; the time requirements of the position and attendance of such events may result in loss of pay, thus an increase in salary may be appropriate.

In response to Member Rische, Member Messerlian clarified that such expenses cannot be written off your taxes. Member Rische also spoke on the importance of ensuring voters are aware that the salary amount does not represent total compensation.

Member Sargent shared that when her husband was on the School Board, there were some members who could not afford to attend all the events. She concurred with Member Messerlian's idea of including some type of formula to adjust the salary accordingly, and spoke on the importance of receiving public input on these issues.

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Member Messerlian suggested a better public meeting notice to gather more input. Chairperson Lee noted that there will also be an opportunity for public comment when the Commission presents their recommendations to the City Council.

The Committee then discussed if a certain salary could deter a possible candidate from seeking office. Commissioner Shwartz commented that there are many things in life that limit one's choices and is not sure the issue of salary would stop those who are truly interested in public service. Member Rische concurred, stating that this is not the issue and those who are interested in seeking office will do so regardless. Member Messerlian added that it is the cost of campaigning, not salary that would most likely deter someone. Member Busch said that he too does not believe salary is a deciding factor for someone interested in running for office.

Member Bailey put forth the question of why the issue of adjusting Council's compensation is being considered in the first place, and if a large number of citizens have asked for this. He shared that some Council members have found lucrative jobs after finishing their terms on Council, and does not believe more money will give a better candidate.

Member Fitch stated that an increase to salary will show the electorate's appreciation to Council members. Member Busch pointed out that a defeat of the measure could have an opposite affect and send the wrong message.

Member Fox maintained her belief that the salary should be increased; pointing out that no one is seeking public office to make a fortune. She stated that an increase could represent a "pat on the back", noting that an increase in salary has not occurred in 50 years.

Chairperson Lee relayed that his time on City Council was a positive, fun experience and for him it was not about the salary. He does not believe an increase in salary would represent the electorate's appreciation and is inclined to maintain the current amount.

Member Bailey noted Member Messerlian's previous comments regarding one's motivation to seek office and whether the salary should be looked at as an honorarium for service.

Member Fitch inquired if the present City Council is expecting a positive recommendation. Member Messerlian responded that he believes this issue is before the Committee because they do think the salary is low. He clarified that City Council can raise their own salary, but requested an independent citizens group consider the issue. Member Messerlian stated that an increase maybe their expectation, but that is not the Committee's charge.

Per an inquiry from Member Messerlian, staff confirmed that the cost for an election with one measure is \$135,000 and increases \$10,000 for each additional measure.

Noting the thorough and informative discussion, Chairperson Lee polled each member on their thoughts.

Member Shwarts shared that she is even more convinced that the salary should remain at \$100.

Member Sargent believes it should be increased to \$200.

Chairperson Lee and Members Bailey, Busch, Fox, Messerlian, Rische, and Skoll indicated their agreement to maintain the current \$100 salary amount.

Member Fitch stated that she will maintain her recommendation of \$150 with the inclusion of some type of component to adjust the salary accordingly.

2. **a) Information and agenda for next meeting;**
b) Instruction to staff.

Chairperson Lee asked staff to prepare a draft committee report on tonight's discussion and stance on the compensation issue.

The Committee then discussed their next charge relative to changing the City Clerk and City Treasurer's positions from elected to appointed. Chairperson Lee asked staff to contact the City Clerk and City Treasurer to schedule their attendance at the March 29th meeting and relay that they will be asked to present their opinion on the matter and can supply a position paper if they would like.

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson Lee asked if anyone from the public would like to speak. No member of the public requested to do so.

Member Skoll noted her concerns to staff regarding their email and attachments forwarded to the Committee on the City of Burbank.

7. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:22 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Thursday, March 29, 2007 p.m., in the 3rd Floor Assembly Room.

Approved as Amended March 29, 2007 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
